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ITALIAN OPERA—WINTER GARDEN.

The second night of the season was very unfavorable as regards the weather, but the attendance was both large and brilliant. The ever fresh and pleasant opera of "Fra Diavolo" was presented in capital style as regards the leading roles which have rarely been more satisfactorily rendered. The reading of the role of the English Lord, by Signor Ronconi, is new, and is less of a caricature than we usually find it in the hands of men of less experience and smaller genius. Without resorting to extreme burlesque, in which the gentleman is made a snob and a fool, Ronconi presents us a strongly marked and broadly humorous version of a high bred but absurdly fastidious traveler. It is a character shrewdly and brilliantly drawn, and full of points which tell with the public, and one which only a man of his talent could create, and stands out in broad relief among the more important characters.

Zerlina is one of the happiest of Miss Louise Kellogg's efforts. The music suits her style, and she sings it with that grace and naivete which are the charms of her manner, and which the character specially demands. Mazzoleni is certainly the beau-ideal of the dashing Fra Diavolo, as far as bearing and manner are concerned. The one fault he evidenced in his first personations of that character, was a too *prononce* and robust tenderness. It seemed impossible for him to sing in mezzo voice, but this he has overcome in a great measure, and sang the pleasant love songs in a subdued and, at the same time, passionate manner last evening. It was a marked improvement, and supplied the one thing wanted to make him the most effective Fra Diavolo of the present day.

The music of Lady Pamela is not at all suited to Mlle. Testa, but she made the best of it as might have been expected from a good artist. The other characters were well sustained, and the chorus and orchestra were excellent.

Meyerbeer's thrillingly characteristic Opera the "Star of the North," was performed by Mr. Maretzek's Company last Friday evening at Winter Garden, before a large and very fashionable audience. This Opera has always been a favorite with operatic *habitués*, both for its dramatic power and its wealth of quaint yet beautiful melody, which pervades not only the solos, but chorus orchestration.

The Opera was strongly cast, presenting with other fine artists, two of the principal Prima Donnas of the company, Miss Louise Kellogg and Miss A. M. Hauck. There was much interest attending the simultaneous appearance of these two young American artists one matured by few years of experience and popularity, and the other nearly in her novitiate. We have before noticed Miss Kellogg's rendering of the character of Katherina, but we noticed on this occasion many points of improvement over her previous performances. Her voice seemed firmer, the lower tones somewhat fuller and richer, and her execution more articulate and brilliant—her *tours de force* being thrown off with great accuracy and *bravura*. She acts the character with her usual grace and *naivete*. One of the most charming points of her rendering of the music was the closing of the first act. She sang the beautiful *aria* and *ritornella* with exquisite grace and rare pathos, and with admirable lightness and delicacy of execution. It was altogether a charming performance.

Miss Hauck made her first appearance in New York last evening. She is young, pretty and very graceful. Well formed, and a very apt and piquant actress, she has great natural advantages which experience will speedily teach her how to use to the best advantage. She has a very light, but very melodious and flexible voice, which has been very highly cultivated, and over which she has very excellent control. Of course being new to her profession, she misses points and effects which one with more experience would seize, hold and make much of. But in mere vocalism she is already well advanced in her art. Her singing and acting throughout the opera were worthy of the warmest commendation. The duet in the first act between Kellogg and Hauck was the most marked effect of the evening. It is very varied both in singing and in action, and the ladies gave to it all the required expression and dramatic effect; and sang it with a grace and brilliance of execution which commanded a most unanimous and decided encore.

The roles sustained by Bellini and Antonucci were the most striking features of the evening. They were both in admirable voice, and they entered fully into the spirit of the strange

and grotesque characters which the poet and Meyerbeer have so strongly worked out. Bellini was savagely humorous and sang finely, and Antonucci was barbarically rude and bearish, and also sang finely. The other characters were ably supported by Baragli, Reichardt, and others.

The choruses were well sung—some of them so well as to call forth well merited applause. The tenors are specially excellent, and the *ensemble* is good throughout. The orchestra was carefully handled, but the coloring was coarse. This portion especially needs well-considered contrast, as there is in it so much that is boisterous and noisy. It requires a fine perception and a master hand to do justice to the score.

The opera as a whole was a decided success, and will doubtless be repeated.

The popular opera of "Il Trovatore," was performed at a matinee on Saturday last at 1 o'clock. The attendance was large, and the performance was excellent, the little we had time to hear, having to visit several places of amusement.

In the evening of Saturday Mr. Maretzek's company gave an operatic entertainment at the beautiful little Opera House attached to the mansion of Mr. Leonard Jerome. The audience was composed of the very elite of society, and presented an elegant and brilliant appearance. The opera of "La Sonnambula" was given, and Miss Hauck, who was first introduced to the public at this house under the kind auspices of Mr. Leonard Jerome, interpreted the character of Amina in a very charming and graceful manner. Her pure and very beautiful voice was heard to great advantage in this well-sounding house, and both in her singing and acting she more than fulfilled the expectations raised by her first appearance. The other parts were well sustained by Miss Fanny Stockton and Signori Baragli and Fossati.

The "Huguenots" was produced on Wednesday night last. Mr. Maretzek has kept his faith; the costumes and appointments are truly rich and beautiful. No expense has evidently been spared in this department. Mr. Carl Bergmann has evidently taken infinite pains with the choral and orchestral portions of the work, the latter being especially worthy of remark for the admirable *clara obscura* preserved throughout.

The vocal department, with the exception of a few tremendous bursts from Mme. Pooh, which were fine and emphatic, was very weak and unsatisfactory so far as the ladies were concerned, and we forbear entering upon a detailed criticism. The male characters were very ably sustained by Mazzoleni, Bellini, Antonucci, Meuller and others, who both sang and acted with spirit and power. The ensemble pieces were fairly sung, but as a whole the performance of "Les Huguenots" was de-

cidedly not up to the standard to which Mr. Maretzek has accustomed his patrons.

THE POZNANSKI QUARTETTE SOIREES.

The first of the Poznanski quartette soirees was given at Anschutz's Conservatory, Steck's Hall, in Eighth st., on the 29th ult. A large and intellectual audience was present notwithstanding the very inclement state of the weather.

The quartettes chosen for the occasion were Haydn's in D Minor, and Beethoven's in A Major. The gentlemen forming this quartette party have but recently associated for practice, but their performance proves that they have worked hard, and have studied intelligently, thoroughly mastering the meaning and the manner of the compositions. They have in their favor, youth, executive ability and a warm enthusiasm in their undertaking. The first violin, Mr. Isaac B. Poznanski, has the advantage of having studied in the best school—that of Vieuxtemps, and of having constant practice in quartette playing with the best artists in Paris.

The reading of the Quartettes, on Thursday evening, was very admirable. There was no obscurity; every object was clearly defined, and the counterpoint was emphatically and pointedly uttered, so that the design of the works was intelligible to all. Great care was taken of the delicate shading and of the marks of emphasis and expression, which give tone and character to compositions of this class. We have rarely heard quartettes given with such fine artistic coloring. The gem of the whole performance was the wonderful "Andante Cantabile" of Beethoven. The subject, so simply beautiful, and so marvelously varied, was played with exquisite grace, tenderness and expression. The purity of Poznanski's style, his perfect intonation, fine tone and clear execution, and perfect freedom from all display, are qualities which eminently fit him for the leadership of a quartette party. His playing throughout the evening was the theme of commendation and admiration. The other artists Messrs. J. Bernstein, Neuendorf and A Liesegang, proved themselves fully competent for their positions, and gave, throughout the whole performances, general satisfaction. Judging by their first performance, we feel assured that the Poznanski quartette party will achieve a rare excellence in their line of performance, and will do much to popularize the beautiful class of compositions which they so ably interpret.

Madam Zimmerman, though suffering from a bad cold, sang artistically and agreeably. A horn solo, "Abendgesang," by Lorenz, was played in excellent style by Herr Wack, and a pianist, whose name we did not learn, played a solo, which was not at all acceptable.

The second quartette soiree will take place on Thursday evening, Dec. 13.

MATINEE AT IRVING HALL.

Mr. James M. Wehli, the celebrated pianist, gave his first matinee at Irving Hall on Saturday afternoon before a very large and elegant audience, which was attracted by the brilliant talents of that distinguished artist. Mr. Wehli's style has special attractions for the public, his selections being generally of a dashing, florid character, even his large pieces being founded upon subjects well known to all. In addition to this, he is individual in style, like Gottschalk or Thalberg, and impresses his hearers by his unmistakable originality of style and manner. Mr. Wehli is not only a perfect master of all the scale passages, remarkable for his bravura, for his extraordinary passages of thirds, sixths and octaves, for his unerring certainty in large skips, for his clear and decided articulation of complicated phrases, for the freedom and brilliancy of his left hand, but in addition to these acquirements he treats the piano in accordance with its character and its large capacities. Under his hands it has vocal powers and capacities for sentiment and expression, which are unrevealed by ordinary concert players. He thoroughly understands the art of contrast, but his playing never degenerates into mere physical force followed by pp. whispers. He controls the power by strength of finger and flexibility of wrist, and produces the subdued pianissimo by the exquisite and sympathetic delicacy of his touch. In these distinguishing points of excellence Mr. Wehli has certainly no superior and very few equals—in this country.

His performance on Saturday excited the usual enthusiasm; his grand force and his exquisite shading combined, acted as a spell upon his audience which expressed its delight in reiterated and unanimous encores. It is unquestionable that those who listen to Wehli's playing derive from it both pleasure and instruction—pleasure from his display of the perfect mechanism and grace of the art, and instruction from his rare and beautiful treatment of the instrument, in the development of its grand and expressive qualities. It is not, therefore, a matter of surprise that Mr. Wehli always attracts the most accomplished and talented of our amateur and professional pianists in addition to the general public.

Mr. Wehli played upon the famous Chickering grand piano, nicknamed No. 50, which has traveled with him through two extensive concert tours in this country, was well greased at the Chicago Opera House on the night of performance, by some enemy, and crossed the ocean with him to England, where it won the most brilliant and flattering notices from the most celebrated English piano manufacturers, Messrs. Broadwood and Messrs. Collard, and

from a host of the finest artists in the world, headed by Moschelles, Charles Halle and Alfred Jaell, returning with him to New York, after traveling thousands of miles, as fresh and as beautiful as ever.

Miss Antonia Henne, who assisted on this occasion, is a rising and talented young artist. She has a voice of exceeding beauty and flexibility, sings with taste and expression and needs only experience to give her that freedom and abandon necessary for effective public singing.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY EVENING CONCERT.

The fourteenth Sunday evening concert at Steinway Hall was given before an immense audience. There must have been over two thousand people present, and a better class of audience we have rarely seen. The programme was of a very varied and admirable character. The instrumental pieces, comprising the Overture to "Zauberflöte" by Mozart, Liszt's preludes, an Overture to Beethoven, Weber, "Invocation a la Valse," instrumental, by Berlioz, and the celebrated "Raczky March." The most important piece, "Les Preludes," presents many orchestral difficulties and requires very intelligent reading. It received at the hands of Mr. Thomas and his orchestra full justice. The general thoughtfulness of its character was well developed, light and shade were well marked, and the brilliant passages, especially the frequent rapid chromatic scales, were clearly and finely articulated.

The other instrumental pieces were equally well performed. The general execution of this orchestra has greatly improved of late; we find it more prompt, and recognize in it a greater degree of refinement and more unity. With such grand audiences to play to, Mr. Thomas may well take pride in the increasing excellence of his orchestra. We could wish for a few more violins, but we presume the strength is as great as can be afforded.

Mr. Julius Eichberg has not played a violin concerto in New York for some years. We should judge from his performance last evening that he was not in full practice, for his execution, though rapid and neat, was by no means always true. His intonation was often faulty, and he frequently touched an unused string unintentionally, through want of cleanliness in bowing. His tone is small, though pure, and his reading of Beethoven's Concerto (op. 61), though small in character, was intelligent. Mr. Eichberg is not at present calculated to make an effect as a solo violinist.

Mr. J. W. Hill has a very fine tenor voice, and sings with considerable sweetness and taste. He is sadly lacking refinement in the manner of carrying his voice, but he sings with a hearty expression, which carries its audience with him, and gains him their favor and fre-